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428 553 [578] influence of a chief is usually sufficient to settle claims as to which of his brothers shall receive which name. Even if none of them is a chief, some one of them is certain to have greater influence than the others. If a dead man has no sons, his daughters can assume his names, which they may transmit to their children. Failing both sons and daughters, a man's brothers and sisters are his heirs, as usual, the one of influence being the one who really arranges matters.[1] None the less, it [614] must be emphasized that if the members of the immediate family are slow to validate a dead man's names, they may be taken by any member of the ancestral family.

463 •869 [614] In former days it was customary to create a "remembrancer" to preserve the ancestral myth. The older and more influential members of the ancestral family would choose an intelligent young relative to whom to relate the myth in great detail. One informant described how her mother, the last official "remembrancer," had been instructed by her grandfather. The old man had been accustomed to take his granddaughter, a girl about twelve years of age, to bed with him, and whisper to her the myth, with his hand pressed over her mouth to prevent escape of his words. At the conclusion of the recitation [789] he always spat in her ears to make the words stick. The members of the ancestral family, recognizing that the "remembrancer" was the person best acquainted with the myth, were wont to consult him or her about it, and, of course, about the [553] names embodied in it. A "remembrancer" had no authority to decree who should receive names, but appeals were often made to him, and a tactful individual was frequently able to settle disputes.

578 428 614 553 Considering the extreme fluidity of the whole system it is surprising that quarrels are not more common. These are limited by the system of wills, through which a man bequeaths his most valuable personal property, especially his intangible property in *basiut* name-prerogatives (II, p. 1). Ancestral

[1] At the present time the same principle governs the disposal of houses and gardens on the reserve.

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in dances. In front of most houses rises a short totem-pole,* either pierced for the doorway, or standing on the opposite side of the sidewalk.

## The Family

It is probably no exaggeration to say that in every part of the world the most important social unit is the family. It certainly is among the Bella Coola, yet its lack of definite social obligations makes it difficult to define. Reduced to minimum size, the family consists of a man, his wife, or wives, and his children. Such a unit occupies one of the bedrooms of a large house, and it is to such a family that an infant automatically belongs at birth. Disregarding for the moment ceremonial obligations, which are shared by others, it is the father and mother who are responsible largely for the upbringing of the child. Such education as he receives comes from them, with the assistance of members of the ancestral family. This is chiefly imitative; a boy, as he increases in strength, follows his father on hunting expeditions or fishing. The mother teaches her daughters how to make baskets, and they follow her when she gathers berries, or when she cooks and performs household duties. The Bella Coola are fond of children, in many cases to the extent of over-indulging them, and they grow up amid the open life of the large houses, absorbing information of all kinds without being aware of so doing.

Only two kinds of functional training need be mentioned. A wise father carefully trains his sons to remember their debts (I, p. 364), and the method of teaching ancient myths has already been described; otherwise there is little direct instruction. On the other hand, parents devote great care to furnishing their children with every possible means of strengthening their supernatural elements on which success depends. These can

* When the Bella Coola believe that totem-poles were used by their ancestors in early times, they are included in this description of a village, without reference to their development in post-European times. This account is compiled from descriptions given by elderly informants; it is inevitable, therefore, that changes due to European contact may be included.

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be made more powerful by magical means or the ritual acts of relatives. Although these often entail great labour and expense, parents seldom neglect their duty; in fact, care for their children is one of the strongest Bella Coola characteristics, though the methods used are so foreign to the white man that he has difficulty in realizing their meaning. The hope of both parents is to have children to carry on their names; infanticide is unknown and the death of an infant is mourned almost as much as that of an adult. Sterility and impotency are frequent causes for divorce.

At the present time there is a high birth-rate in Bella Coola, although the heavy infant mortality prevents any appreciable increase in the population. In the old days, it is said, there were always large families, though much confidence cannot be placed in this statement. In families where there are several children, the first-born, whether boy or girl, assumes an important position. His or her influence, as eldest, is naturally considerable, and the parents foster this through the vague feeling that it is proper for the eldest to be the most important in the family. In adult years, and after marriage, the influence of the eldest of a family continues to have considerable weight with younger brothers and sisters.

If a man is poor he cannot hope to have more than one wife, and his family circle will be limited to their children, and perhaps to elderly parents. On the other hand, a wealthy and powerful man usually has a larger family. Not only may he have several wives, but his aged relatives, and those of his wife, look to him for support and assistance. Such are usually welcome to live in his house; they lend what aid they can in collecting food, and it gratifies a man's pride and sense of power to be closely surrounded by a large family. The Bella Coola are, on the whole, considerate to their aged relatives.[1]

[1] This is not true of the present. During the winter of 1923-4 a feeble old man, living alone, was often in actual want of food. Childless and dependent, of a once dignitarian himself, none of his surviving relatives, of whom the nearest were nephews, would take him into their houses. Commenting on this man's fate, several Indians pointed out how, in the old days, such a one could have found

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poverty-stricken," say the elders. "If you do, you will become like them yourself."

As a boy grows older, his father insists that he wash, pray, and practise other ritual acts likely to win approval from supernatural beings. He is frequently beaten to inure him to hardship. By the time a youth is eleven or twelve years of age he has become fully acquainted with the principles of the potlatch system and a wise parent teaches him to remember debts. Taking his son to some quiet spot in the woods, he makes a small bundle of cedar twigs, for example, and tells him:

"So-and-so at Bella Bella gave you fifteen beaver skins. When you see this bundle you must think of those skins."

Then he takes another bunch, perhaps of spruce twigs, to represent a present from a Rivers Inlet chief. A bundle of nettle fibre may stand for a Kimsquit debt; one ornamented with a tuft of undyed cedar-bark, a gift from a *Tăl'es* chief; a solid piece of alder stem, a local debt; another section of alder stem with a notch in it, another local debt, and so on. The son is expected to listen attentively, and to repeat after his father what each represents. Then the pupil turns his back and the instructor alters the positions of the bundles. His father tells him to look at them and repeat what each signifies. This is repeated time after time until a boy becomes familiar with remembering debts by means of symbols. In later years, if he becomes a chief, he will use this method for bearing his indebtedness in mind. No system of standardized signs has been evolved, each individual merely designates what he wishes by a mark which he alone can recognize.

A child grows up in the community, absorbing information and lore without conscious effort, learning the activities which he will later practise, fearing the supernatural beings that are dreaded by his parents, marvelling at the power of those endowed with supernatural ability, and generally fitting himself for the struggle of life. If his parents are wealthy, he may be fortunate enough to be given a *noosk* name and to partake in

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occupants of the canoe, heard a roaring noise and saw a fish-weir, similar to those used by the Bella Coola, stretching across Burke Channel, which is about a mile and a half wide at this point. They went close to the beach and a brave man cut a passage through the obstacle. A similar trap was once seen stretching across South Bentinck Arm. 787 * 539

An unusual apparition may be regarded as an omen of death. For example, not many years ago a young half-breed saw a motor-boat moored to the bank of North Bentinck Arm with an eagle seated in the stern. He ran his own motor-boat towards it, but as he approached the eagle became a man. Then as he drew still nearer, never taking his eyes off the other boat, it, with its occupant, sank beneath the water, without leaving so much as a ripple. On relating the incident to his father, the latter recognized it as an omen of death. Six months later the half-breed's sister died, thus confirming her father's prognostication. 787 * 763 [811]

### Supernatural Aid Granted to the Unfortunate

Experiences such as have been cited in the last section are regarded as of possible, and not infrequent occurrence at the present time. On the other hand, supernatural aid granted to those in misfortune, though it is the theme of many stories, is not considered as likely to happen now. The Bella Coola believe the narratives to be chronicles of actual events, and base their conceptions of many supernatural beings on their characteristics as therein described. There is no ceremonial significance attached to any of these stories; they may be, and are told by anyone, frequently for entertainment. Unquestionably, there is a feeling that the moral brought out in such tales is of value in educating the young people, though this point is never emphasized. 787 * 538 [869]

Supernatural aid granted to an unfortunate person is termed *sukwaulaut*. Power so obtained cannot be transmitted by the recipient, although memory of the experience is 787 * [675] [535]

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tense throughout this chapter, and to assume the presence of a number of young men and women ignorant of the significance of the rites. Formerly, the *kukusiut* often had difficulty in impressing the uninitiated with their prowess, and feuds with the *a'alk* were common.

Although membership in the *kusiut* society depends on an ancestral prerogative, it is essentially a democratic institution. A certain amount of wealth is necessary to validate a *kusiut* prerogative, but nothing comparable to that required for a potlatch; in fact, poor men are often persons of great importance within the ranks of the society. Nor are the prerogatives considered to be as valuable as ancestral rights, so that slaves are often admitted as *kukusiut* by their masters. An important *kusiut* is not esteemed by the community in the same way as the donor of many potlatches; in short, membership in the society brings limited ceremonial and semi-religious advantage, not social prestige of a public nature.

## Powers and Functions of the Society

Any secret society can be viewed from the standpoints of a member, and of a non-member. The scope of the *kusiut* organization can be most clearly outlined by describing first what an uninitiated person knows about it. From his infancy, parents impress upon a child the supernatural powers of the *kukusiut* and the dangers attached to their rites. Such instruction is perhaps strongest where one, or both, is not a member. They then voice their own fears, and do not merely deceive for the good of the society. Steeped as every child is in a firm belief of the near presence of the supernatural, he readily believes what he is told. He learns, for example, that if, without special invitation, he dares enter the house where a *kusiut* dance is taking place—at any time during the four days or more that it lasts—his spirit will be drawn from him. This is sufficient to deter him from prying too closely into the rites. Strangely enough, there seem always to have been differences in teaching with respect to this deception. It is believed that if a non-

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*Nuuxtsqnam:* Woman endowed supernaturally by *Anē'litwalsais* and serving as patron (?) to a *kusiut* dancer.

*nuxuliust:* Omen of death.

*Nuxutsmmlmem*, "The One Who Is Thought Of": One of *Tlitsqēlitn-a*'s names and hence a designation given to shamans.

*Nuxuxmlaix:* 1—Man dwelling in *Qemoqme*'s house.
2—*Kusiut* name of a Kimsquit woman.

*nuxuqim:* The cry of *hi, hi*, uttered by Cannibals.

*Nuxuxmmqs:* *Kusiut* name assumed by a *Stuie* woman in the beginning of time.

*nuxuyaxum:* *Kusiut* with right to display a puppet-patron. The difference, if any, between this and *qēlitxum* is obscure.

*Nu'uxwuthumaix*, "The Widener": One of Raven's names as chief.

*nuxkaxilul-um:* Synonym for *kaxutum:* Payments made by the wife's relatives to those of the bridegroom on first arrival outside his house on the wedding day. They are said to be in return for "Food" received from them on many occasions.

*Nuxkaxlxikn*, "Heedlessly Deaf": Name taken by a wife in consequence of slights received from her husband's relatives.

*nuxa-axix:* The binding, by a warrior, of his hair into a top-knot.

*nuxkalxw-i:* Medicine brewed in a skull.

*Nuxtqmxix*, "Place of Much *Eulachon*": Village in the middle Bella Coola valley.

*Nuxuxqimix:* *Nuxwal* name of a Kimsquit man.

*Nuxilkaxlxw-a:* One of the first women to settle at Rivers Inlet in the beginning of time.

*nuxmuxw-it wa xwq"ulx:* One year.

*nuxun:* Envy, in the sense of desire for something from which one is debarred by lack of prerogative.

*nuxpil*, "Empty House": House in which a *kusiut* dance is taking place.

*nuxsilut:* The throwing of grease on a fire to heat, both literally and figuratively, a rival.

*Nuxwly"*: 1—Supernatural beings responsible for an eclipse.
2—Eclipse.

*nuxulitn:* Physical strength of the body running down the sides from little finger to little toe.

*nuxwuxuix:* Hoot-like cry uttered at the coming of a call for *kusiutem* and other important *kusiut* rites.

*nuxq"uxutlkin:* Unexpected stroke of good fortune.

*Nuxwthmlaix:* *Xuxud* name of a Kimsquit man.

*Nuxwdlax:* Site of an ancient town on Schooner Pass.

*Nuxwhlak:* The upper heaven.

*nuxwna:* Woman with thick pubic hair.

*Nuxwnulkqlxto-i:* A *Stuie* repository.

*Nuxtlqcutmxix*, "Where *Eagustox* Speaks": One of the names of the supreme god's house.

*nuxtsqwa-aqs:* Cottonwood bark.

*Nuxtqaxil'ax*, "The Place for Catching Salmon": Name assumed by *Smaaxa* in the beginning of time.

*nuxtlkaqs:* Canoe-maker.

*Nuxtlaax:* River entering the Bella Coola from the south near *Nuxqlalk*.

*nuxtsktaqs:* Children's dance which serves as training for *kusiut* rites and to provide entertainment.